**Matrix Reflection Paper for TOK**

**What does The Matrix convey about reality?** Make sure to find the “knowledge issues” involved in the movie and highlight any Ways of Knowing in your answer.

The Matrix raises the question of “How do you know whether the things you perceive are real or just an illusion.” This position is called skepticism. The Matrix also exploits a theory “What if all of life is actually a dream”? How do we know that we are awake, rather than merely dreaming? How do we know that our thoughts are not being manipulated, and that our perceptions of reality are accurate? The film involves manipulation of the mind and soul where human actions have no real consequences in a world that exists independently of their own mind.

**What is Real?** It is the very premise of the whole matrix deception. Morpheus raises the big metaphysical questions when, in the construct program, he asks Neo: "What is real? How do you define real?" Morpheus goes on to say, "If you're talking about what you can feel, what you can smell, what you can taste and see, and then real is simply electrical signals interpreted by your brain." But the story shows us why this answer won't do. If we define reality in this way, then the Matrix would be "Real." But we want to say (as does Morpheus) that the Matrix is a deception - appearance only. Zion is what's real in the films, and our lives are what are real for us. So how should we define "real?" What is the difference between "appearance" and "reality"?

**Can we know what is Real?** Morpheus tells Neo, "All I offer is the Truth." But can Morpheus really be sure that he's got it? Does he know with certainty that Zion is the real world and not simply another level of the Matrix? (Note his uncertainty at the end of Revolutions.) And can you be sure that you are not in a matrix yourself? What are the tell-tale signs of a matrix? There are none. Thomas Anderson's world seemed just like our world, so can you really be so sure? For centuries skeptics have argued that one can never know for certain what the world is really like.

**What is value of real?** The choice between the red pill and blue. For Neo the choice is an easy one. To discover what the matrix is has been his life's goal - of course he'll choose the red pill. But Cypher shows us that the choice is really more complicated. It is easy to choose the red pill when you don't know what you are getting yourself into. But Cypher has seen the desert of the real. After eating the same "God damn goop everyday," he regrets the choice. When Cypher and Trinity argue about this: Cypher: "Free"...you call this "free"? All I do is what he tells me to do. If I had to choose between that and the Matrix...I choose the Matrix. Trinity: The Matrix isn't real. Cypher: I disagree, Trinity. I think the Matrix can be more real than this world. There is a question, how can you decide whether it's correct to say that the Matrix is "less real" than the world Neo awakens to? If our world was an illusion - a matrix of sorts - would you prefer to live in the "real world" if in many ways that world sucked. Ultimately, how you answer this question will come down to how much you value pleasure in comparison to truth. Is pleasure all that really matters or is truth valuable for its own sake?